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Paper on the differences between Trotskyism
and the Communist movement headed by the
CP of the Soviet Union. (Historical background,
including post-World War II developments in the
U.S.)

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001498

FOREWORD

The object of this paper is to explain the basic ideological difference between Trotskyism, and the world communist movement headed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B), usually referred to herein by use of the term "Stalinists." Special emphasis is given to the origin, growth and current status of the Fourth International and American Trotskyite groups.

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2. Ideology

The Trotskyites espouse the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin as interpreted by Leon Trotsky. When Lenin died on January 21, 1924, the struggle for control of Russia centered around two top Communist leaders, Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. As you know, Stalin was a past student of Communism and the two principals themselves, attributed to the final ideological break between them to Trotsky's stand at difference to his theory of "permanent revolution" and Stalin's advocacy of "socialism in one country" first enunciated by him as a policy in his "Foundations of Leninism" published in May 1924.¹ Trotsky branded this as a betrayal of the Bolshevik revolution, stating that the only way to envelop the world in a Communist mantle was to have a world revolution occur simultaneously. According to Trotsky, the fires of the revolution must burn continuously through the world. By so doing they would gain strength from each other. If this was not done, claimed Trotsky, the revolutionary fire in one country would be rapidly extinguished.

Stalin on the other hand declared that you can not have a revolution in every country at the same time because not all countries are ready for a revolution at the same time. This is so because countries differ in economic, political and social development. Revolutions, therefore, must be developed on a stagger basis. We

the Soviet Union as a base of world operations and then spread the revolution from one country to another ever expanding the Communist orbit. When the Soviet camp possesses the preponderance of might and physical power, then launch the all out attack on the remaining non-Communist world.

As a result of his continued opposition, Trotsky was expelled from the CPSU (B) on November 14, 1927 and exiled to Alma-Ata.¹ He appealed his case in absentia to the Sixth World Congress of the Third International held in Moscow in 1928 and was repudiated.

Trotsky finally was ordered to leave the Soviet Union in February 1929. Following his expulsion, Trotsky lived in Turkey, France and Norway finally settling in Mexico in 1936.² On August 20, 1940 he was mortally wounded by a Stalinist assassin who gently lodged a bullet in Trotsky's skull. Trotsky died two days later. From the time of his exile until his death, Trotsky continued to attack the Stalinists from abroad, organised the Fourth International, and, as a matter of fact, was completing a scathing biography on Stalin at the time of his assassination.³ After Trotsky's exile, Stalin assumed the complete leadership of the Soviet Union.

While so much emphasis has been placed upon the ideological split several passages from the works of Stalin and Trotsky are set forth in the following paragraphs. They not only express the views of the two men but also demonstrate that despite anti-Stalinism, the Trotskyites adhere to Marxism-Leninism and stand for the same strategic objective as the Stalinists, namely a world-wide proletarian revolution.

In the first edition of his pamphlet "The Foundations of Leninism" published in May 1924, Stalin stated as follows:

"Formerly, the victory of the revolution in one country was considered impossible, on the assumption that it would require the combined action of the proletariats of all or at least of a majority of the advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. Now we must proceed from the possibility of such a victory, for the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development, within imperialism, of catastrophic contradictions leading to inevitable wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries — all this leads, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries."

In his later treatise "On The Problems of Leninism" Stalin stated:

"But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and a establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of Socialism — has been insured. The principle task of Socialism — the organisation of socialist production — has still to be fulfilled. Can this task be fulfilled, can the final victory of socialism be achieved in one country, without the joint efforts of the proletariats in several advanced

countries? No, it cannot. To overthrow the bourgeoisie the efforts of one country are sufficient; this is proved by the history of our revolution. For the final victory in the theory of Socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of a peasant country like Russia, are insufficient; for that, the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are required."

Pamphlet "The Foundations of Leninism" -- "On The Problems of Leninism" by Joseph Stalin, 1950 edition, pages 228-229.

Leon Trotsky wrote in his biography entitled "Stalin" published in 1946:

"...the concept of permanent revolution has completely passed the test of history. During the initial years of the Soviet regime no one denied that, on the contrary, that fact found acknowledgement in a number of official publications. But when the bureaucratic reaction against October opened up in the calmed and cooled upper crust of Soviet society, it was at once directed against the theory which reflected the first proletarian revolution more completely than anything else at the same time openly exposing its unshaded, limited, and partial character. Thus, by way of regulation, originated the theory of socialism in a separate country, the basic dogma of Stalinism."

In his book "The Revolution Betrayed" published in 1937, Leon Trotsky stated:

"If a bourgeoisie cannot peacefully grow into a bourgeois democracy, it is likewise true that a socialist state cannot peacefully merge with a world capitalist system. On the historic order of the day stands not the peaceful socialist development of 'one country' but a long series of world disturbances: wars and revolutions."

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Leon Trotsky wrote a pamphlet entitled "In Defense of the Soviet Union" which is a compilation of remarks made by Leon Trotsky on the subject over the period 1927-1937. The pamphlet contains a foreword by Max Shachtman dated March 29, 1937. More will be said of him later in this paper. Said Shachtman:

"The average victim of the Stalinist lie that Trotsky is against the defense of the Soviet Union, can easily be liberated from this infamous delusion." To read Trotsky's writings "is not only to learn that the Stalinist version of Trotsky's views and Trotsky's actual views are poles apart, but to learn something even more important: namely, the Marxian position, whose adoption makes possible not a mere verbal and platonic friendship for the Soviet Union, but a vigorous working class defense of it."

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"...the revolutionist defends the Soviet Union in all circumstances despite its domination by the Stalinist bureaucracy."

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Trotsky's remarks are as follows (the date made will be indicated next to the page):

"For the socialist fatherland? Yes! For the Stalinist course? No!"

Date 8/1/27, page 10.

"The general strategic line of Communism must obviously, more than ever before, be directed towards the revolutionary conquest of power."

Date 3/14/30, page 15.

"The defense of the U.S.S.R. from foreign intervention from attack by internal enemies -- is the elementary and ineradicable duty of every revolutionary worker, all that are of the Bolshevik-Leninists."

Date 4/4/31, page 17.

"To defend the U.S.S.R., as the main fortress of the world proletariat, against all the assaults of world imperialism and of internal counter-revolution, is the most important duty of every class-conscious worker."

Date 4/4/31, page 18.

"Unconditional defense of the U.S.S.R., the first workers' state against the inside and outside foes of the Stalin dictatorship!"

"But the defense of the U.S.S.R. must be executed with eyes unblinded. International proletarian control over the Soviet bureaucracy. Merciless exposure of its national-chauvinist and Thermidorian tendencies that find their general-

action in the theory of socialism in one country."

Date 1/27/32, page 20

In "The Revolution Betrayed", mentioned previously, the T-tailor is defined as "a triumph of the bureaucracy over the masses."

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Before leaving the ideological heritage of Trotskyism, it is well to bear in mind that the break between Stalin and Trotsky was not precipitated by ideological differences alone, but was the combination of a long seething feud between them. Both were ambitious for power. Trotsky was a scholar, had the gift of eloquent phrase but appeared to lack "political sense and acumen which Stalin possessed in a superabundant degree."⁵ Stalin was a crafty politician, suspicious in modus operandi, and occupied the all-powerful post of General Secretary of the CPSU (B).

Although identified with the Russian revolutionary movement since 1905, Trotsky wavered between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks for many years.⁶ He finally joined the Bolsheviks in the summer of 1917 and soon distinguished himself as a leader of the October 1917 revolution, but later as organizer of the Red Army. Stalin, on the other hand, was an "old-guard" Bolshevik. In his last testament, dated December 23, 1922, Lenin characterized Trotsky as the "most able man in the present central committee". He criticised Trotsky, however, for "his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs." Lenin also lauded Stalin in his testament but tempered his praise by cautioning that Stalin "has concentrated an enormous power in his

hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution."⁵ On January 4, 1923, Lenin allegedly made an addendum to his testament proposing therein that steps be taken to remove Stalin from his post as General Secretary of the CPSU (B).⁶

During this period of controversy the air was filled with charges and countercharges. Trotsky later justified his open opposition to Stalin by claiming: "The inner regime of the Bolshevik Party was characterized by the method of democratic centralism. The combination of these two concepts, democracy and centralism, is not in the least contradictory." He also asserted that the doctrine that Bolshevism "does not tolerate factions is a myth of the epoch of Lenin"; and that in reality the "history of Bolshevism is a history of the struggle of factions."⁸ Trotsky, of course, was speaking of an intra-party privilege. Trotsky's reasoning obviously was unacceptable to the Stalinists. Trotsky was charged with "underestimating" the role of the peasants in the road to socialism; with using bad judgment in refusing to yield to the harsh terms imposed upon the Russians by the Germans during the December 1917 Brest-Litovsk negotiations when in Lenin's view the Bolsheviks had no option but to capitulate; and also was accused of many other alleged improprieties and derelictions.⁷

All this considered, Stalin's "socialism in one country" was the most practical and logical solution to the Soviet's problems at that time. The country was still reeling from the effects of World War I, the October revolution, foreign intervention, civil war, economic chaos and the loss of Lenin's leadership. In addition,

Communist-inspired revolts had failed in Hungary and Germany.

Actually, Stalin's new program was merely a change of course and not a reversal of the revolution. History has borne this out!

The Formation of The Fourth International

Following the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern held in 1933, Trotsky sympathizers were expelled from Communist parties throughout the world. In 1933, Leon Trotsky issued a call for the founding of a Fourth International.⁹ The feud between Stalin and Trotsky continued unabated. Trotsky, *in absentia*, was the chief defendant in the infamous Moscow purge trials during the years 1936-1938. Numerous "old-guard" Bolshevik leaders were accused and condemned to death for allegedly conspiring with Trotsky to overthrow the Stalinist regime. Trotsky himself was condemned to death.

In the few instances where the brainwashed defendants confessed to specific circumstances that could be verified, the falsehood of their confessions was immediately apparent. For example, a hotel in Copenhagen where three defendants allegedly had an appointment with Trotsky, could not exist many years before the date of the meeting.¹⁰

The Founding Conference of the Fourth International was held in Switzerland on September 3, 1938. Thirty delegates representing groups in eleven countries attended. A program was enacted which asserted among other things that "the strategical task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow." The U.S.S.R. was denounced as a "degenerated workers' state." The delegates also adopted a constitution which included the principle of "democratic centralism."¹¹

III. Expansion Of The Trotskyite Movement

In considering the world-wide Trotskyite movement it is good to trace briefly the story of Trotskyism in the United States. Among the representatives of various countries attending the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928 was James P. Cannon, a delegate of the Communist Party, USA. While there, Cannon came into possession of a copy of Trotsky's appeal entitled "The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of Stalinism." Cannon became converted to Trotskyism at once and thenceforth smuggled a copy of Trotsky's document out of the Soviet Union. Upon his return to the United States he circulated it among members of the Communist Party. As a result of his activities supporting Trotsky, Cannon and another top Communist Party leader Max Shachtman were expelled from the Communist Party in October 1928. Additional Trotskyite supporters dropped out of the Communist Party and in May 1929 approximately 100 American Trotskyites met in Chicago, Illinois and formed an organization known as the Communist League of America. This organization lasted until December 1934, when it joined with a major portion of the membership of the American Workers Party and formed the Workers Party of the United States. At the 1936 convention, the Workers Party of the United States merged with the left-wing faction of the Socialist Party of the United States. The fusion took place in June 1936 but the followers of Cannon, also known as Cannonites were expelled during the following year.

The September 11, 1937 issue of "Socialist Call," an organ of the Socialist Party of the United States, said: "What lies beneath

the split in the Socialist Party is not that which separates the Trotskyites from the Stalinists, but that which unites them...
Trotskyism and Stalinism, arch-enemies in program are never

the like children born of one womb."

William Z. Foster, head of the Socialist Party of the United States, wrote in the September 1937 issue of "Socialist Review" that "there is little reason to believe, that if Trotsky had won instead of Stalin, there would have been an end of intrigue, plots and the reign of fear in Russia."

With the cooperation and supervision of Leon Trotsky, then in Mexico, a convention of Trotsky adherents took place in Chicago, Illinois during the period December 31, 1937 - January 3, 1938. This was to form the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) which today is regarded as the only Trotskyite party in the world. Establishment of the SWP meant that the followers of Leon Trotsky in the United States were gathered together for the first time in one organization.

James P. Cannon was elected National Secretary at the founding convention, a position he still held until recently. Now he is the Honorary Chairman. Max Shachtman became editor of "Socialist Appeal," the SWP weekly newspaper.¹³

A "Declaration of Principles" and a constitution for the Socialist Workers' Party were adopted at the convention. The "Declaration of Principles" states, among other things, "since the capitalist state is the political instrument of capitalist dictatorship, and since the workers can carry out socialization only through the conquest and maintenance of political power, the workers must,

as the necessary political phase of the change of ownership and control of the productive mechanism, take control of state power through the overthrow of the capitalist state and the transfer of power fully from it to their own Workers' State—the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

The "Declaration of Principles" further stated that "the main specific task of the SWP is the mobilization of the American masses for struggle against American capitalism, and for its overthrow." The Russian Revolution was described therein as "the greatest event in the history of mankind" and "the guide and inspiration of the workers of the entire world." The Declaration also stated "that the elementary and imperative duty of all workers, and especially of the revolutionary Party, is to defend the Soviet Union unconditionally against any and every imperialist nation."¹⁴

Shortly after establishment of the Fourth International in Switzerland on September 3, 1938, in which delegates from this country participated, the SWP proudly and openly proclaimed itself the American section of this international Trotskyite organization, and continued to do so until December 1940, when, because of the newly enacted Smith Act, it formally severed this affiliation.¹⁵

Comparative harmony reigned in the SWP from 1938 until the Hitler-Stalin Nonaggression Pact on August 24, 1939, when a so called minority section, headed by Max Shachtman openly condemned the Pact and the Hitler-Stalin aggressions which followed. The Shachtmanites referred to the Hitler conquest and the Stalin "conquests" as imperialistic. The majority group, lead by James P. Cannon, also

was anti-communistic toward the Hitler-Stalin alliance, but contended the Soviet Union must be defended at all costs as the only "motherland" of the proletariat--a position the SWP still holds today in the current world crisis.

In April 1940 at an SWP convention, Shachtman and his followers were suspended. Rather than capitulate, they immediately thereafter formed the Workers Party. Shachtman was named National Secretary. The new organization openly called itself a section of the Fourth International until November 1940 when it formally disaffiliated from the international organization because of the Taft-Hartley Act. It should be noted that the Communist Party USA disaffiliated from the Third International during this same period for the identical reason.¹⁶

Following withdrawal from the Fourth International, both Trotskyite groups maintained "fraternal" ties with the Fourth International.

Selected leaders of the Socialist Workers Party including James P. Cannon, were convicted in Minneapolis, Minnesota on December 1, 1941, for conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the United States government by force and to advocate insubordination in the armed forces.

The November 16, 1946 edition of the SWP publication "The Militant," successor to "Socialist Appeal," contained a speech delivered by James P. Cannon on the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. His address was made on November 1, 1946 in New York City. Cannon had just completed his jail sentence. Cannon stated:

"In the Federal court room at Minneapolis, we were

arised, as you know--and not only accused but tried and convicted--of advocating the principles of the Russian Revolution, and of intending to apply those principles in the United States. Indeed, we were guilty of that intention and told so frankly in the courtroom in Minneapolis. And we were convicted and lost our confidence in prison, and we are still living. And here on this festive occasion tonight, marking and celebrating the great revolution, we once again plead guilty to advocating its principles and of intending to apply them in the liberating revolution of the workers in the United States. And we add: We hopefully hope to live long enough to carry out that intention.

The Second World Congress of the Fourth International

The Second World Congress of the Fourth International was held in Paris, France in April 1948. It marked the occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of the "Communist Manifesto." Thirty-three parties allegedly were represented at this meeting. Max Glachimov arrived in this country with the apparent hope of having the Workers Party accepted henceforth as spokesman for Trotskyites in the United States. The "Quatrième Internationale," organ of the French Central Committee of the Fourth International, March-May 1948, duly contained an official account of the Second World Congress which labelled the Workers Party as "politically hostile to the Socialist Workers Party and the International." It ended with the

stated in "why the Socialist Workers Party furnished the framework for the rapid organized development of the Trotsky movement in the United States." Morris Stein represented the SWP at this Congress.

The Status of Trotskyite Movement at Home and Abroad.

The Workers Party was renamed the Independent Socialist League (ISL) in March 1949. Max Shachtman currently is National Chairman. Shachtman made a trip to Europe during the summer of 1949 in order to create a "left" among Socialist groups to combat what he indicated to be the two main imperialist camps—the Soviet Union and the United States. Although this trip was a failure, Shachtman and other ISL leaders continued to maintain contact with Marxists in different parts of the world.¹⁷

The Socialist Workers Party has continued to be the principal Trotskyite organization in the United States. The Third World Congress of the "Fourth International" was held in Switzerland during the period August-September 1951. Delegates, observers, and visitors attended from forty-one countries and represented twenty-seven organizations. This information appeared in the November-December 1951 issue of the SWP theoretical magazine "Fourth International." An editorial in this issue declared: "The head of the world proletariat rests on the shoulders of Trotsky's Fourth International. Its ideas proclaim the inevitable triumph of the world October which will realize the slogan between the program and the movement which carries it to victory."

The SWP was represented at this Congress by Georges Clarke, at that time a member of the SWP National Committee.

In August 1951, approximately fifty individuals representing a faction within the SWP known as the Johnson-Furness Tactic broke away from the SWP over the question as to whether Yugoslavia should be regarded as workers' state or categorised as state capitalism. The "Johnsonites" took the latter position whereas the majority group held that Yugoslavia was a workers' state and therefore deserving of SWP support. In the same fashion as the SWP distinguished between the Hungarian people and the Soviet leadership, so it distinguishes between the Yugoslav people and Tito. The Johnsonites set up a separate organization which became known as the Johnson-Furness Group headquartered in Detroit, Michigan.

The June 4, 1951 issue of "The Militant" contained the text of a letter to the Political Committee of the SWP from Natalia Trotsky, widow of Leon Trotsky. Dated May 9, 1951, the letter stated that Natalia Trotsky could no longer remain in the Party's ranks. She denied that she was continuing to regard the Soviet Union as a workers' state. She also criticised the Party's position on Yugoslavia and its characterization of Soviet-dominated nations in Eastern Europe as "workers' states." She further asserted: "You are even now supporting the armies of Stalinism in a war which is being endured by the anguished Korean people. I cannot and will not follow you in this."

The same issue of "The Militant" contained an answer to Natalia Trotsky. Dated May 29, 1951, it asserted that the SWP still followed Leon Trotsky's line in defending the Soviet Union while at the same time renouncing Stalinism. With respect to the war in Korea, the SWP denied it was supporting the armies of Stalinism pointing out in

representatives from factions to discuss possible lines of a reunion. A rift developed between George Clarke, spokesman for the Stalinist Union of America, and M. Pablo, predicated in part on this resolution, and Clarke withdrew from the Congress prior to its final adjournment. The Communites regarded this as a victory.

A tremendous amount of correspondence relating to this latest factional dispute was exchanged among Trotskyite groups throughout the world, many of which are outlawed in their respective countries. In this country, principal explanatory articles appeared in "The Militant" of November 16, 1953 and January 18, 1954.

Following the Fourth World Congress, C. Preston, Secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International, sent a message to the Socialist Workers Party which was circulated to local branches throughout the United States. The message read as follows:

"Dear Comrades:

The International Committee of the Fourth International sends its warmest fraternal greetings to the Socialist Workers Party on the occasion of its Congress.

Whilst the reactionary legislation of the United States prohibits the SWP from being an affiliated section of the Fourth International, your organization has always been in the forefront of the struggle to defend our principles and program. This was particularly the case in the last great fight against Pabloite liquidationism, where

SWP National Convention, November 1954.

your major political contribution was responsible for the reorganization of the overwhelming majority of our international movement on the solid political foundations demanded so staunchly by Comrade Trotsky.

"For its contribution to this task our movement owes a debt of gratitude to your Party and to Comrade Cannon."

We salute all the rank and file comrades of your Party, who struggle day in and day out against the vicious McCarthyite witchhunt. Their determination and fighting spirit is a model for all of us to follow.

"Long live the SWP."

"Long live the Proletarian revolution of the U.S.A." 28

The outcome of this latest factional dispute which had such extensive international ramifications makes crystal clear the dominant role played by the Socialist Workers Party in the Fourth International headquartered in Paris, France. Trotskyite groups, throughout the world, for many years have depended on financial and other support from the SWP.

V. Information On American Trotskyites

Because the SWP plays such a prominent part in the international Trotskyite movement it is believed desirable to include a few useful items relating to the membership and structure of the organization.

National headquarters of the SWP are located at 116 University Place, New York City. Principal SWP leaders are:

National Chairman - James P. Cannon

National Secretary - Farrell Dobbs

Dobbs ran for President of the United States on the SWP ticket during the 1952 national elections. He polled only 10,306 votes in the seven states in which he was on the ballot.¹⁹

SWP organs are "The Militant", a weekly newspaper, and the "Fourth International," a quarterly magazine.

The SWP has been designated under executive order 10450 by the Attorney General. It has approximately 500 members.

The quarters of the Independent Socialist League (ISL) are located at 114 West 14th Street, New York City. Principal ISL leaders are:

National Chairman - Max Shachtman

National Secretary - Albert Gates

ISL publications are "Labor Action," a weekly organ, and "The New International," a bi-monthly magazine. It has about 250 members.

The ISL also has been designated under executive order 10450, by the Attorney General. Shachtman, however, has been waging a vigorous campaign to be removed from the list of subversive organizations.

In the event of a war with the Soviet Union, the SWP has indicated full support for the Soviet Union as the lesser of two evils. The ISL has indicated it would oppose both "war camps."

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